

**I-Schools Caucus  
November 15-16, 2007  
Chicago, IL**

Draft Minutes

**ATTENDING**

Bruce, Harry (Univ. Washington)  
Cantwell Smith, Brian (Univ. Toronto)  
Dillon, Andy (Univ. Texas)  
Fenske, David (Drexel)  
Foley, Henry “Hank” (Penn State)  
Griffiths, José-Marie (UNC) – by phone  
Larsen, Ronald (Univ. Pittsburgh) – chair  
Liddy, Liz (Syracuse)  
Pollack, Martha (Univ. Michigan)  
Preece, Jenny (Univ. Maryland)  
Unsworth, John (UIUC)  
Richardson, Debra (UC Irvine) – by phone  
Saxenian, AnnaLee (UC Berkeley)

**Agenda and Minutes**

The minutes of the June 27, 2007, meeting in Washington, DC were approved. The agenda for this meeting was approved.

**Financial Report**

Clarification is required from Larry Dennis regarding the billing/receiving of funds, particularly the apparent discrepancy between the amount collected and the amount expected from the number of members. This is likely the result of the timing of schools joining the iCaucus, but this needs to be clearly documented.

The Treasurer is responsible for sending out bills; checks should be made payable to Drexel University.

Recognizing that we have international members and that the growth of international membership is encouraged, the Treasurer was encouraged to amend amount due to show USD.

The Treasurer was encouraged to include in the content of the annual dues letter a summary of accounts and member joining dates. Members of the iCaucus agreed that a

more detailed accounting of funds expended, attached to the annual bill, would be helpful.

The details of the \$240,000 billed and collected need to be understood by all members. An understanding of the joining dates for each institution will help.

### **iConference 2008 –**

The conference will be held February 28 – March 1, 2008 at UCLA. See <http://www.ischools.org/oc/conference08/> for details.

The conference management system is set up, coming online a bit later than originally anticipated. Credit card processing is being done by a UCLA service. Developing an ongoing record of the planning process that would enable consistency in the management of the conference was suggested, including maintaining a record of reports, submissions, attendance, etc.

To date, the program committee has received 180 submissions. The committee is seeking reviews of each submission by one student reviewer and at least one academic or professional reviewer, with the exception of panels and discussion groups. Conference proceedings are to be placed online.

The conference management system lists 289 people who have attended prior conferences.

Support for the doctoral workshop is being sought from NSF. A decision is pending.

### **MBSA (Marketing) –**

Support among iCaucus members for MBSA's proposed corporate partnerships program was weak. Concerns were expressed about potential conflicts in prospect management. After considering MBSA's work, particularly as it relates to local (campus) interests vs. national (caucus) interests, we decided to elevate consideration of MBSA's continuing relationship with the iCaucus on today's agenda.

### **Membership –**

The iCaucus continued its long-standing discussion of conditions for membership, as currently summarized on the iSchools web site at <http://www.ischools.org/oc/charter.html>.

John Unsworth asked what the likelihood is that schools who would not be natural or preferred members would want to spend \$10K / yr to be members, suggesting that the dues may, in itself, be a sufficient condition for qualifying membership.

**It was agreed that a \$10K membership buys one vote.** Membership can be initiated by either a candidate contacting the membership committee or by the membership committee approaching a candidate. Getting too large is not considered to be a likely problem, given the annual cost. It was suggested that we need to encourage additional international partners to join (particularly outside of north America).

In considering the candidacy of new members such as CMU, the question of *who* is a member arises... universities, or schools within universities, or departments within schools? To date, a fundamental criterion has been that the head of the member unit report to the chief academic officer of the institution.

**The iCaucus agreed to review membership criteria, to pick institutions to be encouraged to join, including internationals, and to establish a timeline for recruiting them.**

David Fenske noted that a Consortium of iSchools in Asia-Pacific (CSAP) has been organized, suggesting that we follow up with them. See <http://icadl2007.vista.gov.vn/PanelDiscussion.pdf> for a description of the panel session at which this is to be presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Asian Digital Libraries ([http://icadl2007.vista.gov.vn/conf\\_prg.htm](http://icadl2007.vista.gov.vn/conf_prg.htm)). Panelists listed include:

- Shalini R. Urs, Professor and Director, International School of Information Management, University of Mysore, India (Moderator)
- Joyce, Chao-chen Chen, Professor and Chairperson, Institute of Library Studies, National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan
- Christopher Khoo Soo Guan, Associate Professor, School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
- Edie Rasmussen, Director and Professor, School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of British Columbia, Canada
- Shigeo Sugimoto, Professor, Graduate School of Library, Information and Media Studies, University of Tsukuba, Japan

Further discussion reinforced the observation that while identity issues continue to be an issue for the iCaucus, we need to move beyond early priorities for marketing to more pressing and professional needs and interests, including promotion & tenure, publication, and mentoring.

**Membership fees will remain the same for all members, international and US, with fees being stated explicitly in USD,** in order to avoid confusion with the dollar currency of other nations.

David Fenske offered that we might consider “affiliate membership” for those who do not meet requirements for membership but aspire to it. This might be done under our efforts to develop strategic partnerships and relationships? At the 2006 iConference in Ann Arbor, support was voiced by all attending deans (members and non-members) to

allow affiliations, while understanding that \$10K buys a vote. This would suggest a more active promotion of self-identification.

**Agreement was reached that expansion of iCaucus membership be pursued, based on criteria established by the iCaucus.**

**It was further agreed that the following institutions would be invited to identify themselves as iSchools and to join the iCaucus:**

- **Singapore Management University** (Hank Foley to contact)
- **Carnegie Mellon University** (Ron Larsen to contact)
- **Humboldt University, Berlin** (David Fenske to contact)
- **Copenhagen Royal School of Librarianship** (Harry Bruce to contact)
- **Cornell University** (Liz Liddy to contact)
- **University of Western Ontario** (Brian Cantwell Smith to contact)
- **University of Sheffield** (Andy Dillon to contact)

First contact is to be made before the end of 2007. The individual making the first contact is to explain why the iCaucus is extending the invitation, and to request a letter of interest. Letters of interest will be reviewed by the membership committee (Hank, Harry, Debra, and Anno) and sent to the full iCaucus for a vote within 30 days of receipt.

Larry Dennis was asked to **check the current list of members against the email list.**

It was noted that our current membership appears weak in arts and humanities work. John suggested Kings College London's Center for Computing in the Humanities might be approached for membership. No decision was made regarding this.

## **MBSA**

The iCaucus considered our continuing contractual relationship with MBSA in depth. It was suggested that there is useful work they can do, and having someone on retainer to get the word out to the media is important. In contrast, others felt MBSA was out of touch with academia and that our continuing relationship with them does not move our agenda forward. Questions arose regarding how useful a non-academic marketing firm could be in moving forward what is essentially and intellectual movement in the academy.

Concern was also expressed regarding the risk of losing momentum if we break off our relationship with MBSA, noting that they have provided a level of administrative rigor in organizing monthly teleconferences, for example, among our marketing and communications staff. A suggestion was made that we define tighter, more limited relationship with MBSA. It was also noted that we have not provided MBSA with much direction, perhaps stemming from a lack of total agreement amongst ourselves regarding our own goals and objectives.

The current contract runs through April 2008 and there exists little enthusiasm for continuing it beyond that date; the issue before the iCaucus is how to get the most benefit out of this relationship until then. The student survey they provided last year was considered useful. Liz noted that, while the survey did not contribute to Syracuse's thinking about their graduate programs, it has helped the undergraduate program.

Anno suggested that we ask MBSA to conduct a similar survey that would help us recruit graduate students.

Martha suggested that they finish the website and build the database; she is not interested in their assistance with media queries, nor their development of a common "elevator speech."

Brian noted that it is important to have them work **for** us, not have them do things for others on our behalf. They are better when they are working for us.

Harry supported this idea. We have not provided adequate direction. Finishing the website and database are clearly areas of need and areas to which they can contribute.

John asked what more we want them to do in the website. Anno suggested we need a database of faculty and their interests, of our degree programs, and their requirements. The database should (first) be of value to the deans, and is intended for internal use, not for external (e.g. prospective students) use.

Database elements should minimally include:

- Faculty
- Programs
- Degrees
- Size of programs
- Disciplinary foci

We could also consider adding Financial aid strategies – for example funding options for Masters students and PhD students; materials from the Taulbee survey could contribute to this.

We should also develop a better understanding of our graduates' first professional positions and the collective interests of our faculty.

Anno observed that we should build our own tools for the iSchools, not rely on the CRA IT deans group. We need a better understanding across the iSchools about where our faculty come from, for example. Scanning the iSchools' websites can provide a good set of initial material that could subsequently be filled out more fully by focused inquiries.

Martha noted that UM SI gets lots of hits on the biographies posted on their web for the graduate programs, suggesting that we also need to provide information that would be equally as useful to undergraduates.

There is no substantial interest among iCaucus members in the corporate partnerships program as proposed by MBSA.

**The iCaucus agreed that the MBSA contract will not be extend beyond April 2008.**

The iSchools.org email list needs to be updated and edited to remove employees of MBSA and to assure that all the iSchool entries are correct.

Brian suggested that we hire one of our own marketing folks (on a one-year rotation) to work with the iCaucus to move the marketing initiatives forward.

The iCaucus adjourned for dinner, planning to reconvene on November 16.

**November 16, 2007**

Ron reported that he called Mal Schwartz (MBSA) after the meeting yesterday to inform him that we would not be extending our contract beyond April 2008, and that we will be down-scoping the work until then to include web and database development.

### **iCaucus Membership**

David suggested we revisit the question of affiliate status for schools that do not meet requirements of full membership. An affiliate membership need not cost anything, but could provide a way for interested schools to begin to align themselves with the iSchools. Membership (including one vote in the iCaucus) would continue to be \$10,000 per year.

Brian spoke against the notion of affiliate membership, but Harry indicated that he knew of Australian schools who are not (now) iSchools but who aspire to become iSchools, and that some form of affiliate status could help them (and us).

Anno & Brian offered that perhaps some form of iSchool association, separate from the iCaucus, should be considered.

Andy reminded the group that our original agenda was to define and establish the ifield, not to create another permanent organization. To that end, a sunset period was built in. He opined that we seem to have lost that and are at risk of becoming just another association.

Hank suggested that we don't need to use the term "affiliates"; just call them iSchools.

### **Relationship to other associations**

The company we keep molds our identity. ASIS&T has expressed interest in affiliation with us. There are clearly others with whom we would like to be associated. Perhaps we should consider these as a set, potentially including:

- ASIS&T
- CNI
- SIGIR
- Appropriate organizations in the humanities, law, and medicine... other fields?

We should seek affiliation with other organizations that share our goal of **growing the field of information**. We can be defined by our topology of connectivity as much as by the individual affiliations.

**Motion by John Unsworth (seconded by David Fenske): The iCaucus should explore several affiliations, including but not limited to ASIS&T, digital humanities, CNI, SIGCHI, SIGIR.**

The motion **passed**, with 9 in favor, 2 abstained, and 0 opposed.

### **Ray von Dran award**

Liz Liddy will write a descriptive paragraph of Ray's attributes that can be used to evaluate candidates for the Ray von Dran award. The award will include a financial component of \$5000 + expenses, and the awardee will be expected to deliver a lecture at the iConference at which the award is presented.

The iSchools website will indicate that the nomination process is open, and that nominations can be submitted at any time. The iCaucus will accumulate nominations and make an award when appropriate.

The Ray von Dran Award Committee is the full iCaucus.

The above approach to the award was approved unanimously, although no formal motion was made. No award will be made at the 2008 iConference, but Ray will be recognized for his contributions to the field, and the existence of the award will be announced.

Liz will work with Aimee to develop an appropriate tribute to Ray in the opening iConference session, including announcement of the award.

### **iSchools community**

An email list named [Community@ischools.org](mailto:Community@ischools.org) will be established for "iSchool affiliates."

### **Topics and considerations for future meetings**

Hank volunteers to set up Angel (?) site at PSU to push out and manage topics.

- Research funding
  - Jenny suggested discussing ways to make research sponsors more aware of us (e.g., NSF). José noted that one of the problems with research sponsorship is the selection of reviewers for proposals
  - The Office of Cyberinfrastructure (OCI) at NSF should be a target.
  - Who are we talking to at NSF, IMLS, NEA, NEH, NIH, Mellon, etc?
  - Anno asked how to deal with foundations like Mellon when they go to CS rather than iSchools for research in areas such as digital humanities. How do we establish iSchool status when these opportunities arise?
  
- Multidisciplinary criteria of evaluation (promotion and tenure)
  - Brian proposed that as part of the 3 year review, the dean should agree with the candidate on publication practices, etc., to which they will be held accountable at tenure review. (The provost rejected this proposal at U Toronto. Brian will share his proposal with the iCaucus.)
  
- Best practices in talking to provosts (and others)
  
- iCaucus operations (e.g., administration and marketing)
  - Consider paid internships, post-degree positions, or marketing professionals at our respective institutions to do marketing and outreach for the iCaucus.
  - Employ a part-time administrative assistant to keep us on track.
  - David Fenske mentioned that Drexel is working with a marketing firm in Philadelphia in a “major marketing blitz” on radio, TV, etc. (\$200K worth)
  - UIUC will propose a webmaster and administrative assistant for the two years of John’s tenure as chair of the iCaucus; this proposal will be reviewed at the iCaucus meeting at the UCLA iConference.
  - The Treasurers’ report should include a budget plan. The administrative assistant can help put this together.
  
- Strategies for financing students at different levels.
  
- Dealing with our own faculty regarding issues in the field. Strategies for developing a common vision among faculty.
  
- How can we inject a better understanding of the iSchools’ role in major national initiatives?
  - The CCC parts of CRA’s recent activities were cited as being somewhat problematic.
  - Ed Lazowska’s “big tent” speech at CRA was a call for action for CS, omitting iSchools, while unabashedly talking about our territory. It was a call for action for CS, who continue to lose numbers of students, although their funding is fine.



- Brian observed that we are ahead of the game, and that we just need to stay there (“surfers out 10 years ahead”). **He will circulate his paper on iSchools as skunk works for the future of the university to members of the iCaucus.**
- Andy – add *development* to future agenda topics.
- Harry – we should discuss end-to-end student articulation, from undergraduate to PhD for the information field across the iSchools.
  - We need to define the value proposition for our students to continue on to graduate school.
  - Syracuse is considering a 5-year program between arts & sciences and IST.
  - Brian asked if we should be thinking about an MI degree, noting that we are hurt by the lack of common degrees.
- **Harry’s presentation at COLIS identified 10 trends. He will distribute it to iCaucus members.**

### **Meeting format**

The format of this meeting works well, Thursday and Friday are good. The next meeting will follow the UCLA iConference. The IT deans meet in DC earlier that week.

Hank reminded us that the branding/marketing issue came up at the last CRA IT deans meeting, and that we need to be in a position to explain our rationale for discontinuing our work with MBSA.

Ron agreed to craft a positive press release regarding MBSA’s accomplishment of our initial set of goals and that we are now equipped to continue our marketing and outreach activities independently.

We do need to sustain the progress achieved by our communications managers and facilitated by MBSA. We also need to make sure that our marketing efforts include an appropriately international perspective.

Adjourned at 12:00 noon.

